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A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF MERCENARIES

by

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(This is an excerpt from a research paper in which Colonel Dodenhoff quite exhaustively examines the problem of employing mercenaries, using the Congo as a case study. Space precludes the complete publishing of this work but instead excerpts will be presented in this and the following issue. The current article features a brief history of mercenary activity while the follow-on will examine the use of mercenary forces in the mid-1960 Congo rebellion. These works are not only interesting reading, but should serve to place the employment of mercenary forces in a perspective that is more objective than normally appreciated by the U.S. military professional. Ed.)

The use of mercenaries is probably as old as war itself. Mercenary armies have appeared in almost every highly organized society in history and played an important role in the ancient world--Philip II of Macedoniu was delivered as a hostage to Thebes; on returning to Macedonia he seized the throne and later, in concert with mercenaries, occupied Thebes and deprived the Thebans of their independence; foreign mercenaries appeared in the armies of Alexander the Great and were well represented in the Roman Legions; with their own citizens acting as captains, the Carthaginians employed mercenary soldiers in the Punic Wars with the Romans.

The Heritage. Mercenaries were common to all armies, but generally they were engaged for a single campaign only. In England, Harold had a body of Danes in his army when he defeated the Norwegian king. These were the famous "housecarls" (from the Anglo-Saxon *huscarl*) who were hired soldiers originally established in the kingdom of King Canute (1018-1035).¹

Later during the Battle of Hastings in 1066, "one of those battles which at rare intervals has decided the fate of nations," there were Normans, Frenchmen, Flemish, Bretons, and soldiers of fortune from a dozen other nations who were attracted by the prospect of conquest. William realized that the army he

needed to invade England could not be recruited from Normandy alone, since by feudal law he did not possess the power to call out his vassals for service overseas. However, William's cause attracted many followers, for the conquest of so extensive and wealthy a country as England offered unlimited plunder and estates to soldiers of fortune and land-hungry sons of nobility. Volunteers flocked to William's standard from every quarter of France and from beyond its borders. They were staking their lives against riches and power which William the Conqueror, Duke of Normandy, had sworn would be theirs if they won and survived the battle.²

The mercenary officer was the dominant type from the breakdown of feudalism to the latter part of the 17th century. He had his origins in the free companies which flourished during the Hundred Years War (1337-1453). Under the mercenary system the officer was essentially an entrepreneur, raising a company of men whose services he offered for sale. Success was judged not by professional standards but by pecuniary ones. An army was composed of separate units, each the property of a different commander. The mercenaries were individualists, to some degree in competition with each other; they possessed neither common standards nor corporate spirit. Discipline and responsibility were absent. War was a predatory business, and the ethics of a predatory business prevailed.³

One of the most famous of all mercenary groups were the Swiss fighting men, who were hired, sometimes by the Swiss cantons themselves, for service throughout Europe to form many famous bodyguards. The Swiss Wars produced a famous Swiss infantry that frequently sold its service where it was profitable. Swiss auxiliaries formed a regular contingent in many of the armies of Europe, especially of Italy and France. Over 1 million served in France

from the time of Louis XI to Louis XIV (1665-1715). As the reputation of the Swiss fighting men rose they became to be widely employed by the French, and they gradually displaced the Scottish personnel of the royal bodyguard, rendering loyal service often in adversity. Over 700 Swiss Royal Guards, for example, were massacred at the Tuileries in Paris, defending Louis XVI from the mobs of the Revolution. The Swiss were granted the motto *Honneur et Fidélité*, and their name became synonymous with faithful service throughout France. However, in 1859, the Swiss confederacy forbade the recruitment for service abroad. The remnants of this force, the Papal Swiss Guards in Italy, have shrunk since then to a mere ceremonial bodyguard.⁴

Machiavellian Admonishment. *Condottieri* was the name given to soldiers of fortune, leaders of the mercenary military companies who were in the service of the Italian States during the latter Middle Ages. Owing largely to the wholesale condemnation of the system by Machiavelli, the Italian *condottieri* became regarded as a byword for greed, treachery, and incompetence. Machiavelli considered them as such in the following appraisal:

Mercenaries and auxiliaries are useless and dangerous, and if anyone supports his state by the arms of mercenaries, he will never stand firm or serve, as they are disunited, ambitious without discipline, faithless, bold amongst friends, cowardly amongst enemies, they have no fear of God, and keep no faith with men. Ruin is only deferred as long as the assault is postponed; in peace you are despoiled by them, and in war by the enemy. The cause of this is that they have no love or other motive to keep them in the field beyond a trifling wage—which is not enough to make them ready to die for you. They are quite willing to be your soldiers so long as you do not make war, but when war comes it is either fly or decamp altogether.

Mercenary captains can be either very capable men or not; if they are, you cannot rely upon them, for they will always aspire to their own greatness, either by oppressing you, their master, or by oppressing others against your intentions; but if the captain is not able, he will generally ruin you.⁵

In reality, however, the *condottieri* took his profession seriously. He studied war as a fine art, fought with skill and bravery, and sought to win fame even more than money. He was, however, bound by no ties of patriotism to the state which he served; his interest was to prolong war rather than end it. The necessity of buying up leading captains to prevent them from taking service with an enemy strained the financial resources of even the wealthiest of Italian rulers. The Milanese, on the death of Duke Philip, hired Francesco Sforza against the Venetians, who had overcome the enemy at Caravaggio, and then allied himself with them to oppress the Milanese, his own employers. The father of Sforza, being a soldier in the service of Queen Giovanna of Naples, left her suddenly unarmed, by which she was compelled, in order not to lose the kingdom, to throw herself into the arms of the King of Aragon. The Venetians and Florentines increased their dominions by means of such force, but of the capable leaders whom they might have feared, not all conquered; some met with opposition, and others directed their ambitions elsewhere. The one who did not conquer was Sir John Hawkwood, the Englishman who commanded the "White Company," whose fidelity could not be known as he was not victorious, but everyone admits that had he conquered, the Florentines would have been at his mercy. Hawkwood, who died in Florentine service in 1394, fought for 30 years for various masters and was typical of the many English, Spanish, German, and French captains whose companies fought in Italy.⁶

Perhaps over a long period and during her many wars, France has employed mercenaries as much, if not more, than most other countries. Foreign soldiers, in particular, came to be associated with the French King's bodyguard, a practice which began in the 9th century, developed, and remained a tradition until 1830.

Middle Ages. For centuries Scottish soldiers had a fighting reputation in France second to none. It is recorded that as early as 886 the King of France had a Scottish bodyguard. In the year 1400, for example, the Scottish contingent was about 7,000 strong and included 75 archers.

During the 15th and 16th centuries, Scottish mercenaries were periodically employed by the French kings, and for a short time there was even a body of Scottish gendarmerie. It may come as a surprise to some that the traditional forerunner of the French Foreign Legion were the Scots. For a good many years Scottish mercenaries held a place of pride in the French military life, but they began to be rivaled by the Irish, especially in the latter part of the 17th century. The Irish mercenary had, of course, frequently appeared upon the French scene, and by 1714 there were seven Irish regiments in the pay of France.⁷

Wild Geese. In the latter part of the 17th century and after the Jacobite War in Ireland, the members of the Irish Brigade distinguished themselves on many battlefields on the continent--Foteny, Ramillies, Blenheim, and Loudun. The military articles of the Treaty of Limerick provided the authority for the Irish military personnel to take service in a foreign country.⁸

After the siege of Limerick, in which the Irish defenders, almost without ammunition, had repulsed the well-equipped veteran army of King William

III, the treaty, agreed to on 24 September 1691, provided that the garrison could march out of the city with "arms and haggage, drums beating and colors flying." Additionally, the treaty provided that the officers and soldiers who wished might go to any foreign country, with the government providing them with ships. Almost 20,000 of these Irishmen went to Brest and entered into French service. These military emigrants were the vanguard of the vast exodus of 450,000, the flower of Irish manhood, that departed Ireland during the 1691 to 1745 time period.

A second stage of the Hibernian Diaspora caused the dispersion of Irish soldiers from France over the southern and eastern European kingdoms. They never made their way, however, to these dominions in the same number as they did to France, nor did there exist the strange racial affinity that has always bound them to the Spanish; and yet, possibly no dynasty appreciated their services more than the House of Austria. The Emperor Francis Stephen once wrote: "Our troops will always be disciplined; an Irish coward is an uncommon character, and what the natives of Ireland even dislike from principle, they will generally perform through a desire of glory." The careless cosmopolitanism of this time period ensured a welcome for any able soldier in nearly every army of Europe, and it was inevitable that many of the wandering Irish should have taken service in an Empire whose very existence was a negation of nationalism.⁹

Numbers of the gentry attained distinguished positions on the Continent. The Irish military emigration was by no means democratic in character. For peasants and laborers there could be no prospect other than service in the ranks, while the members of noble families took the honors bestowed upon them as no more than their due.

Gen. Patrick Sarsfield, the defender of Limerick, went to Brest with the van-

guard of the "Wild Geese" preferring service with the French to that of the English. He later was entrusted with the contingent of Irish troops which represented more than half of the force intended for the invasion of England in May 1692. It was only after the decisive British naval victory of La Hougue that plans for the invasion were shelved.¹⁰

Ulysses, Baron Brown, an Irish colonel of horse [sic] in the Austrian Army was ennobled for his military service by the Emperor. His son became one of Maria Theresa's most successful commanders, Field Marshall Ulysses Maximilian von Browne, "The Eagle," who was considered to be a consummate general and an able negotiator. Von Browne faced Frederick the Great in Silesia during the War of the Austrian Succession and later in the Seven Years' War where he was defeated and mortally wounded at Lobositz in Saxony.¹¹

Many of these wandering soldiers of fortune or their descendants attained high positions in their adopted countries. Among them, to mention only a few, were Leopold O'Donnell, who became premier of Spain, Count Taaffe, premier of Austria from 1879 to 1893; Bernard O'Higgins, the Liberator of Chile; President MacMahon of France; and General Keller, the "Russian" general killed in the Manchurian campaign in the Russo-Japanese war in July 1904.¹²

With these half million "Wild Geese" spread throughout Europe, leaving their mark of military professionalism, none would have imagined that the sign of the "Wild Goose" would "fly" again some 273 years later. The scene this time was to be in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in the heart of Africa; a mercenary force once again trying to sustain a nation in chaos, once again in a conflict that involved powerful external forces. However, in this endeavor they were condemned rather than applauded.

Hessians and America. Possibly no event in history has had a more decided effect on the American philosophy of mercenary employment than the experience in the American Revolutionary War. This event has been inculcated in American history texts for almost 200 years and probably provides the main basis for the derogatory connotation of mercenary operations in the American view.

Throughout the 18th century, Hessians and Hanoverian regiments were constantly in the pay of the British Government. Frederick II of Hesse hired out 30,000 of his men to fight for Great Britain in the first American war. These troops included some of his best regiments, all drilled on the Prussian system and officered by experienced men. The *Jäger Corps*, who rivaled the American riflemen, were the best soldiered troops on the British side. One-third of the British forces under General Howe were Hessian troops. Due to amnesties, desertions, and combat losses, only 17,313 returned to Europe after the war's end. The landgrave of Hesse, who sold his troops at so much a head, received upward of \$2,500,000 for Hessian soldiers lost in that struggle.

In U.S. history, the term Hessian is often indiscriminately used for all the German mercenaries who fought on the British side during the Revolutionary War. American history paints a disdainful and contemptuous account of these hirelings who fought for pay against the American patriots. The long line of battles in which the Hessians actually distinguished themselves, such as Long Island, Fort Washington, Brandywine, and White Plains, as well as Newport and Charleston, are minimally covered in American history, while the victories of Washington on Christmas Eve at Trenton and later at Princeton are enthusiastically described as infusing new life into the patriotic cause and regaining confidence in Washington both at home and abroad.

Chasseurs Britannique. Not as well known as the Hessian were other mercenaries who fought on the American Continent. After the French Revolution a considerable number of French royalists emigrated to Germany. Day by day more of these *émigrés* arrived in Germany and the Rhineland princes permitted them to enlist and arm volunteers. Though the French demanded the disbandment of these troops, the conflict that followed between France and Austria-Prussia would not have broken out if the course taken by the Revolution had not placed the French royal house of Louis XVI in danger. With Louis XVI's execution and the outbreak of the Continental War in 1793, the British decided to increase the size of their army by the addition of a large body of foreigners. Accordingly, in 1794 an act was passed for the embodiment of the "King's German Legion" consisting of 15,000 men. These troops, who were increased in the course of the war to nearly double that number, distinguished themselves in various engagements. Corps of the French *émigrés* fought as the *Chasseurs Britannique* (a *corps d'élite* of sharpshooters) in the Peninsula War and in America. This particular foreign legion was disbanded in 1815, the officers being placed on half pay.¹³

The British Contribution. British-born soldiers have often served abroad in the pay of foreign governments. English mercenary soldiers were by no means left out of the picture, and over a period of time a number of English regiments were in the service of France. There was one in the 16th century, two in 1646, oddly enough known as the "Stewarts Regiment" and the "Bavaria Regiment," but it seems that in spite of the titles the personnel were English.

Although the number of Scottish, Irish, and English, especially the latter, declined as the use of other foreign troops increased, their traditions lin-

gered on, and there were invariably British units of one kind or another in foreign service. Englishmen, Scotchmen, and Irishmen singularly or in bodies served during troubled times in most European countries.¹⁴

During the Crimean War, the British Government enlisted the aid of foreign stipendiaries of German, Swiss, and Italian nationalities. About half of the troops enrolled became efficient soldiers by the time hostilities ceased, however, they were later dishanded at a great cost in gratuities.

La Legion Etrangere. The most renowned of all mercenary forces in the history of the world, the French Foreign Legion, also saw service in the Crimean War. This legion of strangers (*Legion Etrangere*) of many nationalities distinguished itself significantly in battle with some 900 of the 3,200 legionnaires dying of wounds during the war. This body of foreigners, many of whom were "men with a past," volunteered for service with France and fought valiantly in the Crimea.

Despite the many years of peace, Paris in 1830 was not unlike Germany after the 1939-1945 war. The convulsions of Europe had left a hopeless flotsam of displaced, transplanted foreigners loitering along the boulevards which Napoleon had built to glorify his triumphs. Veteran soldiers who had fought for the Empire and the Republic were penniless and desperate. They were ripe for any trouble. On the other hand, they were potentially useful for anyone who could harness their displeasure.

The idea of forming a mercenary battalion of foreign undesirables appealed to Louis Phillipe who had come to the throne in August 1830, and also to the authorities in Paris. Principally, such a battalion would remove them from the streets of the capital. France's manhood had been decimated in the Napoleon campaigns and further heavy

French losses in other campaigns would not be popular.

Originally the Legion was organized in Toulon on 9 March 1831, founded by a Royal Ordinance, written on a small piece of official French War Office notepaper. Ten days after the original ordinance it was thought to be necessary to forbid Frenchmen to enlist in the legion, but they still could and did, simply by declaring themselves either to be Swiss or Belgian.

By the beginning of July the framework of the first battalions had taken shape, and a Swiss officer, Colonel Stoffel, was appointed to command. Colonel Stoffel, an experienced officer of ability, and French officers who had been sent to help him energetically tackled this wild tangle. Mixed among the wild variety of ex-soldiers and would-be soldiers were some who were obviously physically unfit for military life. Several contemporary accounts of these detachments describe them as motley groups wearing remnants of a gaudy variety of military uniform; some were too old, some were too young, many were unfit, and frequently many were drunk.

Colonel Stoffel asked for more officers and a number of French *sous-officiers* to train this new formation and to enforce discipline. Although by the end of the year five battalions were functioning passably well, there were some minor reorganizations the next year. Later, when recruiting became better organized, another two battalions were formed, making a total of seven in all. These were composed of companies of men of the same nationalities, as follows: 1st-former Swiss Guards and Hohenlohe; 2nd-Swiss and German; 3rd-Swiss and German; 4th-Spanish; 5th-mixed but mainly Italian and Sardinians; 6th-Belgian and Dutch; and 7th-Polish.

The legion fought well and helped in the conquest of Algeria. They also later fought creditably in the Franco-Prussian

War and added to the history of mercenaries on the American Continent by fighting in Mexico, helping to place Maximilian on the throne. Later the legion fought with distinction in the Great War, World War II, and Indochina.

Most English-speaking people's concept of the Foreign Legion stems from romantic fiction and films which contain shoddy emotions, banal situations, and glaring inaccuracies of fact. The world's children of all ages loved the Foreign Legion. Despite novels by Marie Louise de la Ramée who wrote *Under Two Flags*, under the pseudonym Oida, and Percival Christopher Wren's *Beau Geste* and *Beau Sabreur*, the Foreign Legion is an outstanding example of the triumph of a way of life over the literature written about it. Despite millions of published words of blame and praise, of truths, half-truths, and lies, the legion has remained essentially the same for more than a century. Politics and the changing social currents of the world have been the determining factors in its enlistments, its casualties, and even beyond; the legion, surviving major and minor wars with great external pressures, ultimately met disaster, not from outside but from within. The legion that now exists at Aubagne, near Marseille at Camp de la Demande, has survived this disaster and still remains the world's most famous mercenary organization.

French public opinion is divided on the legion. Some citizens feel it is disgraceful that their country should hire foreigners to fight its battles. With a certain logic that may be cynical, French Governments have viewed the question in this manner: "There are foreigners who wish to fight for us, and we have battles to be fought. Is it not true, that for every foreigner who dies in battle, the life of one Frenchman is saved?" This logic is the result of a long tradition in France which many French military historians ignore. It is not widely known that over the course of

centuries the French have employed more mercenary soldiers than any other Western nation. Its Foreign Legion is only the last in a long line of mercenary units. Contrary to general belief, relatively few British and Irish have joined the legion. Still fewer Americans joined the legion until hundreds of young Americans joined during the Great War and paid what they considered to be their personal debt to Lafayette by fighting as mercenaries on French soil.¹⁵

Frontiersmen Legion. Another kind of legion was formed during the Great War, one that was not so romanticized as the French Foreign Legion, but one that would have great similarities to another white legion recruited 50 years later for a mission in Africa, quite close to the same area of conflict.

In April 1915 the Legion of Frontiersmen left London for British East Africa. It is doubtful whether a more remarkable, romantic regiment has ever left Britain to fight abroad. They were, in fact, adventurers and soldiers of fortune collected from all over the world, officially dubbed the 25th (Service) Battalion, Royal Fusiliers (Frontiersmen). But in East Africa they were to be known as "The Old and Bold."

The battalion, 1,166 strong, had been recruited by a South African War veteran, Col. D.P. Driscoll, D.S.O., who had raised and commanded the famous Driscoll Scouts in South Africa. The recruiting was partly done by advertisements in the newspapers and partly by word of mouth starting with Driscoll and his friends—some of them the original Legion of Frontiersmen that existed even before the war. Recruits included F.C. Selous, the famous naturalist, explorer, and hunter and friend of Theodore Roosevelt; W.N. Macmillan, an American millionaire of enormous physique (his sword belt was 64 inches in diameter); Cherry Kearton, the photographer who had specialized in photo-

graphing big game; famous hunters like George Outram and Martin Ryan; a millionaire from Park Lane; a royal servant from Buckingham Palace; a number of late members of the Foreign Legion; ex-cavalry officers from the 9th and 21st Lancers; a naval wireless operator; a circus clown; cowboys from Texas; several publicans; musicians from the dance band at the Empire; London stockbrokers; a number of Merchant Navy officers; Americans from the U.S. Army; a lighthouse keeper from Scotland; Angus Buchanan, a naturalist who had been in the Canadian Arctic Circle when war broke out and had not heard of it for nearly three months—he made his way to join the Frontiersmen via Hudson Bay Port and London; miners from Australia and the Congo; prospectors from Siam and the Malay States; pearl fishers; an opera singer; a professional strong man; an Irishman who had been sentenced to death by the President of Costa Rica; British officials and merchants from Hong Kong, Mexico, China, and Egypt; a number of troopers from the Northwest Mounted Police; music hall acrobats; a lion tamer; and last, but by no means least, an ex-general of the Honduran Army, who became a sergeant in the Frontiersmen and built them a bombthrower. One of them, Lt. Wilbur Dartnell, was to be awarded the posthumous V.C. in a minor engagement shortly after the battalion's arrival. They had joined into a kind of Buffalo Bill army for adventure and for patriotism. They were not to know that they were to get little but wretchedness. Before the war was over most of them were to die in a remote, inhospitable country a long, long way from Tipperary.¹⁶

The American Experience. The American public's philosophy towards mercenaries is almost universal on two counts. First, that mercenaries are considered a part of a foreign scene, and secondly, the term mercenaries is com-

mon parlance for lacking allegiance, being unscrupulous and unprincipled. However, the American participation in mercenary activities demonstrates many examples of actions, by both governments and individuals, that parallel the events that have previously occurred on foreign soil and with foreign nationals.

In the 18th century it was not out of the way for a naval officer of one country to enter the service of another when his own state was at peace. For example, the British Navy reduced its personnel from 110,000 to 26,000 after the War of American Independence which meant that hundreds of officers were without employment; at least 20 of them entered the Russian service.

Kontradmiral Jones. No sooner had the war been over than the Congress of the United States gradually started liquidating our impoverished Revolutionary Navy. Within a short time period all of the ships had been sold or given away leaving the new nation with neither a navy nor a naval program. At the end of the war all the men that remained in the naval service were paid off and turned adrift on the beach. The people of the fledgling nation were so fearful of a monarchical form of government and everything that the Old World represented, they went to remarkable lengths in sacrificing the Navy to prevent the possibility of scheming politicians using it to enslave their own people. It was in this atmosphere that the foremost naval hero of the small American nation, John Paul Jones, on recommendation of Thomas Jefferson, took service with the Imperial Russian Navy in April 1788. Flag rank was what Jones had always coveted, and it was the principal motivation that attracted him to the Russian service. The Empress Catherine II first created him as Captain of the Fleet with the rank of Major General. In Russia he was later known as *Kontradmiral Pavel Ivanovich Jones* (Paul, the son of John).

He even hoped thus to impress Congress. He wrote to Jefferson begging him to use his influence to have him promoted to Rear Admiral USN, as a gesture to "gratify the Empress." But as America now had no navy, there was even less chance of Jones getting flag rank than there had been during the war. He does not appear to have been attracted by the Russian pay (about \$145 a month—however, it was twice what he had drawn in the American Navy).¹⁷

Immigrant Mercenaries. The amount of money paid to John Paul Jones while in the Russian Navy was not too different from the sum that was involved in a far more sobering account of mercenaries; one that is not well advertised for obvious reasons. In Hamburg, Germany, early in 1864, advertisements appeared in several newspapers which offered unmarried, male immigrants free passage to the United States, a bonus of \$100, a guarantee of employment for three years, at the minimum rate Americans were earning in the same job (\$12 a month), plus food, lodging, and medical attention. The purpose of this advertisement was for the recruiting of Germans, by the agents of the Governor of Massachusetts. The Provost Marshal of Massachusetts, when questioned later, indicated that it was explained to these "immigrant mercenaries," orally, in German, that they were joining the Union Army. However, it is doubtful if any were aware that they would soon be wearing a "Blue Union snit" fighting the Confederate forces.

These "mercenaries" were originally landed at Gallop's Island near Boston and later were posted to the 20th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry and the 35th Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers on the banks of the Rappahannock. With the Union Army pushing men into action as fast as they could produce them out of recruiting sources, the Germans were split up among the Massa-

chusetts companies, sent into combat unable to understand what was happening or what they must do or where the dangers lay; in a few days, many were stumbling to their deaths in the wilderness.¹⁸

Blue and Grey Foreigners. Significantly, these "immigrant mercenaries" were not the only foreign mercenaries to take service with one of the contestants during the American Civil War. Officers who had previously been in the service of the Prince of Prussia or the Swedish kings, and others, took leave of absence from their service to fight in the war. Among the more notable were Major Heros Von Borecke, Brevet Brigadier Generals Von Egloffstein, Von Blessingh, Von Schack and Von Vegasack. Heros Von Borecke, who took service with the Confederacy and became J.E.B. Stuart's Chief of Staff, was previously on the staff of the Prince of Prussia. Baron Fred W. Von Egloffstein and Louis Von Blessingh both had military training and experience in the German Army before coming to America for the Civil War. Von Egloffstein and Von Blessingh were both breveted brigadier generals United States Volunteers, USV for war service. George Von Schack came to the United States on a 3-year leave of absence from the Prussian Army where he had served as a Captain of Cavalry. He also was breveted a brigadier, USV during the Richmond campaign in 1862. Baron Ernest Mattais Peter Von Vegasack received a special furlough and "recommendation" from the brother of the King of Sweden to go to Washington during the Civil War. He fought as a private at Yorktown and Williamsburg, later rising in rank to brevet brigadier general and awarded the "Congressional Medal of Honor" on 23 April 1863 for "serving successfully as ADC and advantageously changing the position of troops under fire at Gaines Mill, Virginia, 27 June 1862, while covering Fitz John Porter's retreat."

Upon returning to Sweden in August 1863, the Swedish king allowed him to wear this "foreign decoration" and eventually Vegesach retired as a major general in the Swedish Army. The significance of a mercenary soldier winning the nation's highest award is unique in the annals of our nation's history. Understandably, this event is probably not well known by the average American.¹⁹

The Khedives Knight Errants. Not all of the American experience with mercenaries has been associated with foreign nationals. In certain events in military history, Americans have been hired into an army not of their own country. Such was the case of some 50 officers from both sides of the American Civil War who, after the fighting ceased, were unable to face the rigors of civilian life and took service with the Khedive of Egypt in the 1870's. Some wanted the security of position that belongs to military life; some wanted to atone for dishonorable incidents of the war; some simply sought adventure. Many of them had fought in three conflicts—the Seminole, Mexican and Civil Wars—and soldiering was all they knew.

The Khedive was eager to avail himself of the skills of these officers in engineering, navigation, surveying, exploration, and conquest. The half a hundred Union and Confederate officers who went from the United States to Egypt had a high degree of technical excellence, superior training, and a rich experience. They were for the most part graduates of West Point and Annapolis. They had perfected their training with experience on the high seas or on the American frontier; they had fought Indians, Mexicans, and each other, gaining experience in the management of men, in the logistics of supply, and in the tactical requirements of armed conflict.²⁰

These Union and Confederate officers who put on Khedive's uniform were

recommended for service by no lesser personage than the head of the American Army. Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman, who from his own ranks, and who had gained high appreciation of the merits of others against whom he had fought, had recommended most of them to the Egyptian ruler. In the Union and Confederate service they had held rank from lieutenant to major general. Interestingly, no conflict arose between them over the issues of the Civil War, and the wearers of the Blue and Grey dwelt peacefully together in Egypt.

However, major problems and differences were experienced between the Americans and the Egyptians. These Americans were required to face and deal with people of a different culture and different religious background, of imposing an American technical advanced society upon deep-rooted and established alien systems, of communicating American concepts of efficiency, order, law, and system to the Egyptians, and of resolving their own internal conflicts. All these factors contributed in some degree to the abortive attempt by Ismail to expand the influence of Egypt into Abyssinia. After the defeat of Ratib Pasha's Egyptian force at Khaya Khor and Gura in 1876 by King John, the Negus of Abyssinia,²¹ American military prestige dropped severely. Those Americans who had officered and advised the Egyptian forces at Gura were blamed for the defeat and were methodically cashiered from the Egyptian service. The loss of 10,000 men, 10,000 new Remington rifles, and 25 cannons was a defeat not easily overlooked by the Khedive.²² Memoirs of this period of history by some of the principals provides interesting information on the participation and names of these American soldiers of misfortune.

Gen. Charles Pomeroy Stone, U.S. Volunteers, who one day would build the pedestal for the Statue of Liberty, was the senior American officer in Egypt. Gen. William W. Loring, late a

colonel in the U.S. Army, later a major general in the Confederate service, and still later Fércek Pasha and general in the Army of the Khedive of Egypt, served during the disaster at Gura. Col. Charles Chaillé-Long of the U.S. Volunteers served as Chief of Staff to Gen. Charles George "Chinese" Gordon for a period prior to his explorations. "Chinese" Gordon, a British officer, had fought from Crimea to China and also took service with the Khedive. Chaillé-Long is primarily known for his explorations of Uganda, Lake Victoria, Nyanza, Karuma Falls, Juba River, and Lake Albert.²³

Generals Colson and Field, and Col. William McEntyre Dye, Capt. David E. Porter, son of the Union naval commander, and others—men of ability, of experience and adventurous spirit agreed to serve in any war except a war that would be fought against the United States.²⁴ Their pay was approximately that of similar grades in the U.S. Army, and for those who served in any of the distant provinces an additional 20 percent was awarded. In general, the men from the Confederate service took a grade no lower than they had had in the Army of the Lost Cause with the Khedive paying transportation costs between New York and Cairo. Should a man become ill during his term he could accept a two months' severance pay and resign. The heirs of any man who died in service received a full year's pay, and the widow of any who died in battle or of battle wounds would receive gratuitous benefits unless she remarried or until the majority of her youngest child.²⁵ The veterans of the Blue and Grey who worked for the Khedive and their descendants would soon go forth to other parts of the world and once again hire themselves out to a foreign army. However, it was not until a quarter of a century later that a significant enlistment took place in France.

Americans in the Legion. Hundreds

of young Americans, together with other young men throughout the world, joined in the great adventure in 1914 by joining the French Foreign Legion. Except for the legion, there was no corps that they could regularly enter as Americans. Forty thousand is considered a rough estimate of these young war heroes who were too eager to wait. The Americans who entered the service of France after the outbreak of war were volunteers recruited from all classes of society. Millionaires, and there were some, writers, lawyers, engineers, boxers, butchers, explorers, and especially university students.

The legion, now 84 years old, provided a constitutional loophole that no other fighting army could offer. The technicality that allowed Americans to enlist in the legion without forfeiting their U.S. citizenship lay in the wording of the enlistment contract itself. Legion volunteers were not required to swear an oath of allegiance to France, only to the flag of the legion itself. The contract required only that the legionnaire promise "to serve with faithfulness and honor and to follow the corps, or any fraction of the corps wherever the government wished to send it." This saved the Americans their citizenship. They joined in such numbers that one regiment, the 1st, became regarded as an American enclave and, as such, a prime tourist attraction for visiting French generals.

On 8 August 1914 *Le Journal Officiel* in Paris advised: "The Minister of War has authorized the acceptance of foreign volunteers for the duration of the war only. However, no enlistments of foreigners can be received until 21 August 1914." Impatient for the arrival of the enlistment date, the Americans gathered each morning in the garden of the Palais-Royal to learn the rudiments of close-order drill. They were trooped around the square by a onetime West Point cadet named Charles Sweeney, 32,

from Spokane, Washington. At first Sweeney's marchers numbered about 20 Americans who had been living in Paris at the outbreak of war; but the straggling ranks began to fill with countrymen who had been traveling on vacation in different parts of Europe, and by others arriving from the States on almost every boat that reached harbor. After nearly three weeks Sweeney had worn himself hoarse, but by then his ragtag platoon executed facing and flanking movements so well they were actually applauded by the French who gathered daily to watch the fun.

On 21 August the swearing-in ceremony was held in the great courtyard of the Hotel des Invalides, repository of so much of France's military history. The huge golden dome that sheltered the remains of Napoleon Bonaparte looked down on the blinding white yard filled with colorfully uniformed army officers, silk-hatted diplomats, and the hodgepodge of Americans, Englishmen, Poles, Spaniards, Russians, Italians, Greeks, South Americans, Serbs, Croats, Arabs, Sicilians, Norwegians, Swedes, Danes, and others whose nationality could only be guessed at. The yard rang with patriotic speeches defying Germany and promising revenge for the humiliation of 1870; they praised the "selfless act of so many foreigners who wished to contribute their part of courage and blood to the history of France." When the last paper had been signed, 43 Americans were accepted as privates in the *Legion Etrangere*. Their pay would be 30 cents a month.

Many a name personality on the American scene became a mercenary for this paltry sum. Some of those that served would delight any romantic. Alan Seeger, a renowned poet; Algernon Satoris, grandson of Ulysses S. Grant; William L. Bresse, son-in-law to Hamilton Fish, the American statesman; Edward Genet, descendant of the French Minister to the United States, deserted from the U.S. Navy; and others

left wives, families, and jobs to be "engaged in glory alone." With rare exceptions, Americans who came to repay their personal Lafayette debt to France proved to be good fighters. Americans such as Norman Prince; Victor Chapman; Kiffin Rockwell; Denis Dowd; William Thaw, the Pittsburgh millionaire; Elliott Cowdin; Lufbery; Bert Hall; Paul Pavelka; and James MacConnell and the rest later rendered significant service to the French Army while in the *American Escadrille*.²⁶

It was the legion group and the volunteer ambulance drivers serving in the American Field Service that provided, in many cases, the appointments into the French Air Service. These "Legionnaires of the Sky," American volunteer aviators in World War I, saw much frontline action and heavy casualties. The *Escadrille Americain*, N.142, in the French Air Service, later called the *Lafayette Escadrille*, was created in April 1916. Many of these "Galahads of the Air" had previously been bloodied in the mud of France and the trenches of the Marne or Verdun battles. The motives that inspired their beliefs and guided their footsteps were many and varied but practically all had one common instinct—courage, backed by an abundant measure of sacrifice that probably seems idiotic in these materialistic days.²⁷ Who is to say whether these were "patriots," "volunteers," or mercenaries? Certainly the views of France, United States, and Germany all differed on the designation of these men. Parochial and subjective views provided differences in meaning and interpretation; when compared they were all held in a different perspective.

Abraham Lincoln Brigade. In more recent times, 3,300 Americans volunteered and participated in the Spanish Civil War. They were grouped, together from individual and bodies of volunteers, into the International Brigade (XV Brigade) which was formed in 1937

as the III Battalion--Lincoln-Washington (usually referred to as the Abraham Lincoln Brigade). They manned the John Brown Field Battery and participated in some of the heaviest fighting of the Civil War. Testimony to this was the death of 1,600 Americans in the war with the remainder all being wounded once, and some being wounded as many as three times.²⁸

Communist and leftist ideological overtones were a part of the recruitment of this group. It is interesting to note that few, if any, Americans fought for the Nationalists. Practically all of the American combat troops, service and auxiliary units supported or fought on the Republican side.²⁹ The only reported American to fight with the Nationalists appears to be a pilot shot down in October 1937. Some would argue that these men were altruistic and noble, while others, based on an opposing ideology, would paint these troops as fully mercenaries.

Flying Tigers. In the spring of 1941 Americans once more served as soldiers in a foreign army with no question this time as to the pay motive. The American Volunteer Group under the command of Claire Chennault with Meriam C. Cooper as Chief of Staff and 200 U.S. Army Air Force, U.S. Navy, and Marine pilots on "leave of absence" flew antiquated P-40 fighter planes and fought against the Japanese as mercenary air soldiers of fortune, a "Foreign Legion of the Sky." This group, known as the Flying Tigers because of their grinning tiger shark P-40's, provided the only bright spot on an otherwise darkened and bleak scene for the Allies in the Pacific. They provided a stopgap to the Japanese drive in China and eventually contributed to driving the Japanese from the Chinese soil and the air above.

This unorthodox group of "wild, gun-toting Texans," wearing high-heel cowboy boots to fly their P-40's, was a

hotshot outfit--tough and arrogant, as invincible as they were temperamental, and sometimes as equally undisciplined. A goodly amount of good green American dollars was deposited to their credit in an American bank, and that was why many were there. However, not all of them were so motivated. For the best of them and even some of the mediocre ones would have done the same, even if there had been no money.³⁰

Eagle Squadron. During the same time period of World War II, another group of flying "volunteers" entered the scene with American pilots flying in the service of a foreign government. This time, however, the theater of operations was halfway around the world from their China compatriots. The unit designation of these flying Americans was called the "Eagle Squadrons" who were to fight in England during the Battle of Britain.

America was still at peace in the early 1940's, but some of her young men were very much at war. They were transport pilots, crop dusters, washed-out cadets, students, and other adventurous youths who had gone to Canada and enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force or Royal Air Force units.

In October of 1940 these Americans were transferred to the newly organized 71st Royal Air Force Pursuit Squadron, the first of the Eagle Squadrons. These Americans wore Royal Air Force uniforms with the distinguishing Eagle Squadron patch on the left shoulder. The 71st was soon joined by the 21st and the 133rd Squadrons as more Americans signed. Many of the adventurous flyers became aces in the "Battle of Britain." One in particular was Flight Lt. Chesley Peterson, now a major general in the U.S. Air Force.³¹

The Americans were not the only nation contributing aviation personnel to the Royal Air Force. At one time in December 1941 the Fighter Command

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numbered 34 "foreign" squadrons as compared to 66 British. In addition to the three American, of the foreign squadrons ten were Canadian, eight Polish, four Australian, three Czech, two Belgian, and one each New Zealand, Norwegian, Newfoundland, and French. This grouping into "national" squadrons was only accomplished after the arrival of the British reinforcements from war training organizations. Previously, the unique camaraderie in these squadrons had been the international flavor of these organizations.³² Once again, whether patriotic or venal in motive, in reality the composite nature of these squadrons and their nonnational characteristic easily falls within the Webster definition of mercenary.

Postwar Reservoir. Before the age of intense nationalism, characterized by World Wars I and II, it was not uncommon for men of talent and ability to serve faithfully and with distinction in the political and military establishment of countries other than their own without being regarded as traitors. In the past, as the feudal organization of warfare decayed and capitalism emerged, mercenaries formed the nuclei of many armies. With the full development of capitalistic society, national armies took more and more the place of the professional adventurers in search of gain. The period after the Great War; the Revolutionary Wars of the United States, Russia, and France; the Civil Wars of the United States, Britain, and Spain; the Wars of Succession; Continental, Peninsula and Carlist Wars have always developed a large number of trained military personnel who have accepted service in some mercenary force, normally after a war in their own country.

Modern Mercenaries. After World War II an unprecedented number of trained guerrilla warfare and counter-insurgency experts was turned loose in a restless world of former colonial and

underdeveloped areas. In many of these areas newly emergent states began organizing and staffing intelligence agencies as one of the status symbols associated with the trappings of sovereignty. World War II produced a manpower pool of trained, hardened, and unemployed former soldiers and partisans. Many of these individuals were unable to integrate themselves into the postwar life of their respective countries. These "centurions" needed the security of an organization with high morale and esprit de corps. When associated with such a unit, they move up rapidly in one of several elite, special force organizations.³³

It may be very important and meaningful that the United States possibly solved a major problem by "unwittingly" forestalling the possibility of ten million potential mercenaries by subsidizing its veterans with the provisions of the G.I. Bill. As lucrative as this program was, however, not all of this group were satisfied at being so occupied. Some still needed the "Big Battalion" of institutionalization, while others appeared to be motivated by idealistic reasons.

First in 2,000 Years. Such may have been the case of Col. David Marcus, known by his *nom de guerre* as "Mickey Stone." An American citizen, he was a graduate of West Point who had served on General Eisenhower's staff in Europe with the rank of colonel. He helped draft the Italian, German, and Japanese surrender terms and was a member of the U.S. delegation to Teheran, Dumbarton Oaks, Yalta, and Potsdam. He volunteered for service with the Haganah during Israel's war of independence. He had been appointed as a single commander for all forces operating in Jerusalem and the Corridor after the initial failure in Latrun in May 1948. Specifically, on 28 May 1948 he was given his first command in Haganah as the Supreme Commander of the Jerusa-

lem front with authority over Etzioni, Harel, and the 7th Brigade. Here Marcus was appointed the first "general" of an Israeli army in 2,000 years--and ironically he was an American. Under his guidance and drive the Israelis began to launch small-scale attacks, initially not too successful in gaining ground but the benefit derived by his hammering away was that the pressure on Jerusalem was relieved, and attention could be directed against Latrun. Mistaken by one of his own sentries, Col. Marcus was killed on 11 June 1948, just hours before the cease-fire, and his body was returned to the United States for burial at West Point.³⁴

As can be expected in this late 1940 conflict, there was more than one volunteer that participated in the fight. Jewish and non-Jewish volunteers from Canada, South Africa, Australia, Britain--former Royal Air Force and Army Air Force pilots--came to help Israel. Some even brought their own aircraft, such as Mody Allon, a former officer of the South African Air Force, who subsequently became the Commander of Israel's first combat squadron.

Fledgling Falcons. When the war ended in 1949 the Israeli Air Force had grown to 249 aircraft of 57 different types, flown by pilots from 28 countries speaking 14 different languages. At the war's end, traditionally, these air mercenaries packed up and left. National Israeli pilots trained in Israel now held the air defense reins of the country. At this time France, herself involved in a war in Algeria, was providing the fledgling Israeli falcons with the necessary modern aircraft in order to guarantee Israel's security.³⁵

It was not too unusual at this time to telephone collect to Miami in response to an advertisement in a local midwest newspaper--relating to "adventure, high pay and flying"--to be told that "you will be contacted." That night, or soon after, two local businessmen or elders of

the Jewish faith would arrive at the individual's home and briefly outline the flying proposition, indicating that his citizenship was not in jeopardy. In a few days, if the individual was still interested, a sum of old, crumpled money of all denominations and condition would be exchanged, a passport miraculously presented, a ticket to Miami, then one to Washington or Baltimore, then on to New York, and soon--usually within five days--the recipient would find himself in Europe or the Middle East flying missions in support of Israel's war of independence. In each case, he was passed from individual to individual and given a ticket for only the next stage of the trip.

The Seconded Leave. Ironically, at this same time orders were being received by Sir John Bagot Glubb (Pasha Glubb) of the Jordanian Arab Legion that all British Army seconded officers were immediately to leave their commands and withdraw from battle. The reason for this order was that the U.N. Security Council, at a meeting on 29 May 1948 had adopted a British resolution calling for a four weeks' truce in Palestine. The resolution called upon all governments to refrain from sending war materials to either side. However, there was no mention in the resolution for the recall of foreign nationals who might be fighting. The British Government, however, presumably bowed to pressure in New York to withdraw its regular officers from the Arab Legion.

The withdrawal of the British officers was a shattering blow. They included all operational staff officers, both the brigade commanders and the commanders of three out of the four infantry regiments, and all the trained artillery officers. The British officers were not a little aggrieved, particularly since they were aware of the activities of Col. David Marcus. Pasha Glubb, not a regular officer in the British Army at this time, received a communication

from the British Legation. This document referred to a British law known as the Foreign Enlistments Act. Under this act Glubb was exposed to a charge of having taken service "without His Majesty's cognizance," with a foreign power.³⁶

The Citizenship Stake. While Pasha Glubb could retain his citizenship and was able to convince the Legation authorities that they had no cognizance over his presence in Jordan, not so was the case with the Americans. The Walter-McCarran Act of 1952 spelled out details that had previously been vague on the conditions of American citizenship law. It specifically barred Americans from serving in a foreign army, voting in a foreign election, or entering the regular employ of a foreign government. All restrictions were subject to certain exceptions, but basically the offenses incurred the forfeiture of American citizenship.

In a test case involving an American who had served with Castro's army in Cuba, the Supreme Court affirmed that service in a foreign army would incur the loss of citizenship. However, this ruling by the Court was reversed by the decision of 29 May 1967 specifically because of the "loss of citizenship" aspects of the case. Service in a foreign army, however, remained illegal with other penalties. Thus, what had been legal, or at least not illegal, for the Americans who flew for France before 1917, or for China before Pearl Harbor, or fought in Allenby's Jewish Brigade against the Turks in 1916-1918, or in Israel's Army against the Arabs in 1948, suddenly became illegal in 1952.³⁷

French Anguish. While the United States and Great Britain were having problems with their nationals serving in foreign lands, so was another country on the Continent. In France many ex-soldiers and partisans, having acquired a taste for violence and adven-

ture during World War II, promptly reenlisted for colonial service after the war. Embittered and disillusioned by their experience in Vietnam, many of them sought compensation by a victory over native nationalists in North Africa. After six years of frustration, hard-core militants, including general officers, organized an illegal Secret Army Organization (OAS) and waged a relentless underground war of terror and assassination. As in all extremist cases, terror begets counterterror with many being killed on both sides. When the plot for seizing power in France and Algeria was uncovered, many showed up in other areas of Africa. These and many other underemployed or unemployed militants appeared in the Congo crisis and reappeared in other active political warfare theaters when they occurred. Many of these freelance mercenaries were adventuresome, fanatic, and frequently embittered personalities; their petty intrigues constituted a threat to the peace of the turbulent area in which they sold their services. However, their activities also complicated and frequently embarrassed the political warfare operations of the major powers.³⁸

Swedish Surprise. While a considerable number of incidents involving French, British, Irish, Scotch, German, Italian, including the American mercenary experience has been related, the foregoing cannot be considered a complete study of mercenary activity since ancient times. However, it does provide a considerable number of examples of events which have been found, in many cases, to be repeated in reviewing the events in the Congo. Perhaps there are few items of a similar nature on which Americans are so sharply divided. Depending on one's reading, or having been exposed to propaganda of one side or the other, the idea of mercenaries has developed strong opinions on the part of the American public. These opinions are not necessarily joined by other

nations, even though they are considering the same historical event. The Hessians in the American war were thought of differently in Europe than in America. The Americans in the Spanish War were considered as mercenaries by the Nationalists, regardless of the "idealistic" nature of their adventure. Surely, Lafayette, Pulaski, and Von Steuben were considered as mercenaries by the British regardless of the "patriotic" label by the American Revolutionaries. On the contrary, no one among the Western nations considers the Swedish elements in the United Nations peace-keeping forces anything but being associated with high forms of idealism. Apparently, however, the opposite has been justly claimed. This is typical when examining cases of most wars involving international forces.

In accordance with the General Assembly resolutions, the donor governments required the United Nations to reimburse them for the *overseas allowances* they paid their men while in the Congo. Some governments, notably Sweden, also required reimbursement for the *salaries* of their men and officers. In referring to a presentation given at a private conference on United Nations Security Forces held in Oslo, February 1964, by Major General Rikhye, the military advisor to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ernest W. Lefever wrote: "All Swedes serving in the United Nations Forces were *mercenaries* and not members of the Swedish Army."³⁹

Some countries cannot send units of their national army outside the country by law and have, therefore, to raise a volunteer contingent. In most cases the unit that is sent is a reserve unit in which the men had their training while serving the army some years previously and just before going abroad receive a refresher course of a few weeks.

So was the case in the Congo with the United Nations paying \$48 a month for the Indian soldier and \$625 a month

for the Swedish "soldier." The reference to Swedish "mercenaries" was compared with a later account, expanded by the same author and publisher, for an official account of the Congo story for the United Nations. Ironically, in the similar section of the official version, references to the Swedish contingent were listed as "volunteers."⁴⁰

Reflection. With all the evidence of history complete with examples of mercenary operations, with all types of nations participating; the idealistic, the pragmatic, the globalist, the small, the large, including our own country—why then the strong opinions voiced against mercenaries? Have we been absorbed with the Machiavellian admonishment against the use of mercenaries? Is it our past experience with Hessians in the Revolutionary War that is incorporated into our thoughts, or perhaps the legality of the situation as expressed in the Walter-McCarran Act of 1952 that taints our thinking toward the use of mercenary forces? Surely, mercenary operations have been a part of the

BIOGRAPHIC SUMMARY



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African scene almost from the first days of the European explorations. Possibly we have been the subject of powerful and subtle propaganda which has turned us away from the very force that has sustained Africans and kept them from communism. The difficulty of establishing the truth becomes increasingly difficult as additional facts are uncovered. It would be convenient if the researchers could, by various "scientific" methods when analyzing the total documentary evidence, read with factual certainty what is true and what is false. Documentary evidence cannot be ignored, however falsified, but whenever

it is in conflict with elementary common sense it is regarded with extreme diffidence. The 35 nations involved in the Congo operations, plus the superpowers of the United States and the Soviet Union and their allies, all viewed the mercenary situation differently. An objective view, rather than long-standing subjective evaluation, is required in order to determine and qualify the rhetorical question as to whether a mercenary force can provide internal and external security for the fledgling nations of Africa, and if the answer is yes, what are the pitfalls?

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We are so outnumbered there's only one thing to do. We must attack.

*Sir Andrew Browne Cunningham:
Before attacking the Italian fleet
at Taranto, 11 November 1940*